United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General expresses "concern" at latest clash in Kismayo; urges participants in Conference on National Reconciliation to work together for successful conclusion; over $130 million pledged for United Nations relief and rehabilitation programme in Somalia at Conference on humanitarian assistance to that country.

+ United Nations appeals to international community for $840 million for humanitarian relief assistance to four million people in former Yugoslavia; international conference on that country's needs scheduled for 25 March in Geneva; European Community to contribute $1.2 million to parachuting food aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Secretary-General, praising West African diplomatic efforts to solve conflict in Liberia, urges regional organization to seek commitment of parties to Yamoussoukro IV Accords at high-level meeting in mid-April; Security Council to consider the matter later this week.

+ International observer missions in South Africa, in joint statement, call for Day of Peace and Reconciliation; also call for meeting between ANC leader Nelson Mandela and Chief of Inkatha Freedom Party Buthelezi.

+ General Assembly appropriates $140 million for financing Mozambique Operation, $17.2 million for Observer Mission in El Salvador.

+ Co-Chairmen of Yugoslav Conference meet with Bosnian Croat leader; meeting with President of Bosnia and Herzegovina scheduled for tomorrow.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed "concern" at the clash between rival factions in the Somali city of Kismayo, on 16 March, which resulted in some casualties.

In a press release issued tonight at Headquarters, the Secretary-General noted that these "regrettable incidents", which occur at a time when the Conference on National Reconciliation is meeting in Addis Ababa, should not be

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allowed to affect the determination of the parties to work together and to co-operate with one another to ensure a successful conclusion of the Conference. Somalis, representing all sections of the society, had invested considerable effort, energy and good will in making this Conference possible, stressed Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Also, he said, the international community had worked hard to support the meeting and was ready to make concrete contributions to the rehabilitation and the reconstruction of Somalia.

In a related development, over $130 million have been pledged by international donors towards the United Nations-sponsored Relief and Rehabilitation Programme in Somalia for 1993. The pledges were made at a three-day Conference on humanitarian Assistance to Somalia that ended in Addis Ababa on 13 March.

In concluding remarks to the Conference, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Eliasson, declared that while he was "painfully aware" of the increasing number of complex emergencies around the globe, the response of donors to the 1993 programme was "very positive".

Moreover, he said, further resources should be forthcoming as the implementation of the various projects picked up pace, more specifically following the planned updates in April and August this year. The United Nations had sought $166.5 million for relief and rehabilitation of Somalia.

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The United Nations has launched a new appeal to the international community for $840 million to cover the relief assistance programme for some four million people in the former Yugoslavia for the rest of the year.

According to a press release issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today, the new appeal is in addition to the nearly $496 million already spent or committed by seven United Nations and associated agencies in ex-Yugoslavia since the beginning of the emergency operation in November 1991. The agency said that, as the lead humanitarian agency in former Yugoslavia, it had called for an International Conference in Geneva on 25 March to discuss the needs of the people in the war-torn region.

The UNHCR noted that there had been a dramatic increase in the number of people needing help in former Yugoslavia over the past few months -- many of whom were victims of the cruel practice of "ethnic cleansing". When the first appeal was launched in December 1991, targeted beneficiaries totaled 500,000; fifteen months and five revised appeals later, that number has increased to 3.8 million, it said.

In a separate development, the European Community announced today that it would contribute some $1.2 million to the parachuting of food aid into Bosnia and Herzegovina by United States airplanes.

According to a press release issued at Headquarters, the delivery of parcels will start as soon as possible from the Rhein-Main Air Force base in

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Frankfurt, under the aegis of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in a joint operation with the Official Development Assistance (ODA) of the United Kingdom.

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The United Nations was "ready to extend whatever assistance" to end the conflict in Liberia, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said. However, before the Organization got further involved, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) should convene a high-level meeting to seek the commitment of the parties to the Yamoussoukro IV Accord, he stressed.

In a his report to the Security Council, dated 12 March, the Secretary-General indicated that he would send his Special Representative for Liberia, Trevor Gordon-Somers, to the region, to urge ECOWAS to consider the problem of Liberia at its upcoming meeting in mid-April. Mr. Gordon-Somers would represent the United Nations at that meeting. The Secretary-General's Special Representative has already held consultations with the warring factions in Liberia, who have indicated to him their intention to accept the Yamoussoukro Accord "as the most realistic basis on which a durable peace can be constructed".

In his report, Mr. Boutros-Ghali pointed out that Liberia represented a good example of systematic cooperation between the United Nations and a regional organization. From the beginning, he wrote, diplomatic and even military initiatives had been taken by ECOWAS. The comprehensive economic sanctions imposed by ECOWAS were an important part of the efforts to bring about a cessation of hostilities, and the Security Council had supplemented ECOWAS action by imposing an arms embargo last November. The Secretary-General said the United Nations would be willing to extend technical assistance to ECOWAS in monitoring the sanctions.

The three-year crisis in Liberia can be traced to the complete breakdown of law and order and civil authority which followed the overthrow in 1990 of the regime headed by President Samuel Doe. The civil war has caused severe casualties and major displacement of population, both inside the country and across the borders into Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire.

Meanwhile, the Security Council held consultations this morning on the Security Council's report and is expected to convene in a formal meeting later this week on the situation in Liberia.
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The international observer missions in South Africa, in a joint statement issued in Johannesburg yesterday, have called for the celebration of Sunday, 21 March, as the Day of Peace and Reconciliation. This day has traditionally marked the commemoration of the victims who sacrificed their lives and freedom -- at Sharpville and elsewhere -- for a new South Africa.

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The statement also called for the speedy conclusion of preparations for a meeting between the African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and Chief Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party which, it said, would contribute towards creating a climate of cooperation, political tolerance and trust.

According to the statement, the observer missions expresssed "grave" concern over the escalation of violence and confrontation between authorities and inhabitants of Bophuthatswana as well as over the detention of two international observers. They urged the South African authorities to repeal the Internal Security Act and to allow all political parties and interest groups to express themselves, especially during the time of transition to a democratic South Africa.

Observer missions of the United Nations, the Commonwealth, European Community and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) were sent to South Africa under Security Council resolution 772 (1992). The statement was contained in a press release issued at Headquarters yesterday by the United Nations Observer Mission in South africa (UNOMSA).

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The General Assembly, at the recommendation of the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), yesterday approved the appropriation of $140 million for the financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) from 15 October 1992 to 30 June 1993. It also appropriated $17.2 million for the financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) from 1 December 1992 to 31 May 1993.

The Assembly asked the Secretary-General to submit a report by 1 July on revised and detailed cost estimates for ONUMOZ for its entire mandate period, which ends on 31 October. The appropriation for ONUMOZ also included an earlier commitment authorization of $9.5 million.

The Assembly also authorized the Secretary-General to commit up to $2.9 million per month for ONUSAL, for the period beginning 1 June 1993. The appropriation for ONUSAL included an earlier commitment authorization of some $8 million.

The Assembly also confirmed the Secretary-General's appointment of Kenneth K.S. Dadzie as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for a further one-year period, through 31 March 1994.

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The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugolavia, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, met this morning with Mate Boban, the Bosnian Croat leader, according to their spokesman, Fred Eckhard.

This afternoon, they were scheduled to meet with the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, and with the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was expected in New York later this afternoon and a meeting with him was planned for tomorrow.

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